

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

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The rule of the Sheikh, which is personal, is directly exerted over the part of Bahrein adjacent to Manāmah, and over the island of Muharraq, where he resides except during the four hottest months of the year. His authority over the rest of the principality is little more than nominal, for the land is divided among various relatives of his own, who hold it as almost independent fiefs, collecting their own taxes, and administering their own justice. Thus the islands of Sitrah and Nebi Sālīh, with all the villages on the E. side of Bahrein to the S. of Khōr el-Kabb, and the inland villages of Rifā' esh-Sharqi and Rifā' el-Gharbi, are held by the Sheikh's brother Khālid. The subtraction of all this territory considerably reduces the Sheikh's revenue, which is derived not only from customs, but also from agricultural duties, taxes on pearl-boats, judicial fees, and rent of town lands, shops, or *khāns*. The Sheikh is assisted in the government by a *wazīr*, whose aid is all the more necessary, as the ruler is frequently absent on the mainland, chiefly for sporting purposes. In the towns of Manāmah and Muharraq there are deputy governors with the title of *emīr*.

Justice, in criminal cases and important civil cases, is administered on behalf of the Sheikh by a chief *qādhī*. The treatment of minor cases depends upon the religious belief of the parties: if both are Sunnis, they go before the (Sunni) Sheikh of Muharraq; if both are Shiahs, before the (Shiah) Sheikh of Manāmah. There are, in addition, seven other *qādhīs* permitted to adjudicate upon cases referred to them by agreement.

Mercantile cases, especially those in which foreigners are concerned, are decided by a tribunal variously called *Mejlīs el-'Urḡī* or *Mejlīs et-Tijārah*, a Customary or Commercial Court, with permanent members nominated by the Sheikh in consultation with the British Political Agent. When one or more of the parties to a case is a British subject, or when none of them are Bahrein subjects, the *Mejlīs* is usually convoked by the Agent, and sits at the Agency, a representative of the Sheikh being permitted to attend. Cases arising out of pearl-diving operations are settled by a special board of arbitration known as the *Sālīfat el-Ghaus*.

RECENT HISTORY AND PRESENT POLITICS

Although the Sheikhs of the Khalifah family had been in direct relations with us since 1805, and under treaty since 1820, another sixty years elapsed before the ruler of Bahrein entered into a binding